

JOHN BOOZMAN
ARKANSAS

141 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
202-224-4843

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 3, 2020

COMMITTEES:

AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
CHAIR, COMMODITIES, RISK MANAGEMENT, AND TRADE

APPROPRIATIONS
CHAIR, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS,
AND RELATED AGENCIES

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee
Defense
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
Defense
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Durbin:

We are writing to share our strong support for funding the HMMWV rollover mitigation program in the FY21 Department of Defense Appropriations Bill. The FY21 President's Budget Request, which we support, includes \$5.9M in Other Procurement Army (OPA) Line 16 and \$93.8M in OPA Line 18 for retrofit of existing fleet HMMWVs with rollover mitigation technology. The House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee instead moved that funding into OPA Line 4 to increase the procurement of new HMMWVs that will also have rollover mitigation technology. While we fully support new HMMWV procurement, we believe that a more balanced approach is required – one that allows for new production and retrofit of current HMMWVs. We recognize the House amendment on the floor that restored \$17M to retrofit fleet HMMWVs with rollover mitigation technology, but we believe the most balanced approach is what was submitted in the FY21 President's Budget Request, and we stand behind that request. It is critical that we begin to retrofit the fleet HMMWVs because that is the fastest way to get the life-saving technology to soldiers. Extensive testing has shown that this safety improvement will provide a 75% reduction in rollovers, resulting in increased reliability and operational readiness of the HMMWV.

As you know, there has been an increase in HMMWV rollovers throughout the country. A July report by the Congressional Research Service found that over 31 percent of U.S. active-duty military deaths since 2006 were the result of non-combat-related accidents. Of those, 16 percent involved vehicles. Between 2015 and 2018, the Army reported a total of 14 rollover fatalities. In 2019 alone, there were eight, and other services have seen similar spikes. This high number of rollovers in military vehicles triggered a GAO investigation. In response, the Army approved a requirement for the installation of Anti-lock Brakes and Electronic Stability Control Kits. To date, only new HMMWVs have been equipped with this lifesaving technology. The HMMWV fleet of about 50,000 vehicles is projected to be in service until 2048; thus it is imperative to retrofit these vehicles as new HMMWVs are manufactured. The FY21 request of \$99.7M for retrofit would have funded 5,471 fleet vehicles (about 11% of the fleet). This funding allows for Red River Army Depot personnel to deploy as teams across multiple installations, and install the kits at the location of the unit, thus having a minimal effect on readiness to the unit. A failure to fund this program in FY21 will result in more injuries and deaths as the vehicles continue to rollover. After 5 years of testing, the Army deemed that this safety improvement must be implemented immediately to existing HMMWVs and the Army is able to begin work in the first quarter of FY21.

In addition, this program supports over 721 jobs across the United States, with approximately 583 of them at the Red River Army Depot (RRAD), the facility where the work will be headquartered and performed.

106 W. MAIN ST.
SUITE 104
EL DORADO, AR 71730
870-863-4641

1120 GARRISON AVE.
SUITE 2B
FORT SMITH, AR 72901
479-573-0189

300 S. CHURCH ST.
SUITE 400
JONESBORO, AR 72401
870-268-6925

1401 W. CAPITOL AVE.
SUITE 155
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201
501-372-7153

213 W. MONROE
SUITE N
LOWELL, AR 72745
479-725-0400

1001 HWY. 62 E.
SUITE 11
MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72653
870-424-0129

620 E. 22ND ST.
SUITE 204
STUTTGART, AR 72160
870-672-6941

In addition, RRAD personnel will install the kits at other locations. Training for this mission has occurred and RRAD personnel have proven to be fully capable for the effort.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your consideration of this request. Please let us know if we can supply additional information,

Sincerely,

Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Tom Cotton
U.S. Senator



John Cornyn
U.S. Senator



Gary Peters
U.S. Senator



Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senator